

# Current Readiness & Enterprise AIRSpeed Newsletter



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## Closing the NEC Fit gap

From Rear Adm. Mark Guadagnini, CNATRA Commander and Total Force CFT Lead

**N**avy Enlisted Classification (NEC) Fit is one of the tools that measure the individual readiness of our Sailors and Marines to prepare weapons systems used in combat to fight and win. Aggregation of the NEC Fit in a squadron tells the unit commanding officer and higher authorities the approximate readiness of the squadron to accomplish the mission of generating combat and combat support sorties.

The job of the Naval Aviation Enterprise's (NAE) Total Force (TF) team is to provide our fleet customers with the right Sailor or Marine at the right place with the correct knowledge, skills and

experience to meet "Fit" entitlements. We are working with Navy and Marine Corps units to close identified NEC Fit gaps.

Gaps are not caused by just one problem. Rather, they are usually the result of many problems, both systemic and specific to the type/model/series (TMS) unit. These barriers are inter-linked together and cause the gaps.

Gap closures efforts require that every key stakeholder in the people readiness process – such as the squadron aviation maintenance officer (AMO), wing maintenance officer, the Navy's Enlisted Assignment Division (PERS40), Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training (CNATT), and others – work together to



Rear Adm. Mark Guadagnini

achieve success.

I am pleased to report that we have made great progress. The work of one of our teams demonstrates just what can be accomplished when we work together to

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## The value of the training triad

By Lt. Cmdr. Kenneth Lookabaugh, Assistant Maintenance Officer Commander, Strike Fighter Wing Pacific and TMS Analyst for NAE Total Force Cross-functional Team

Readiness degraders do not always require action by senior Naval Aviation Enterprise leadership; many can be tackled and resolved at the local level.

A solution implemented by the F/A-18 community is a case in point. Faced with high numbers of untrained personnel reporting to squadrons, it found an internal solution to increase Sailors' training

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# MH-53E T/M/S tackles workforce gaps, realize gains

By Lt. Michael Palladino, Current Readiness Officer, Helicopter Sea Combat Wing Atlantic

In the last few months, the MH-53E Type/Model/Series (TMS) Commander Helicopter Sea Combat Wing Atlantic (CHSCWL) community has made outstanding progress due in large part to the support of Naval Aviation Enterprise (NAE) leadership in overcoming and addressing multiple challenges.

## HM Overview

The HM community consists of two fully-integrated active-reserve MH-53E squadrons, HM-14 and HM-15, with an embedded Fleet Replacement Detachment (FRD) at HM-14 in Norfolk, Va. Despite the community's small size, MH-53E can literally be found across the globe with permanent detachments in Korea and Bahrain, and homeports

in Virginia and Texas. Within 72 hours, each squadron is capable of providing a rapid response Airborne Mine Countermeasures (AMCM) capability to any location in the world where a mine threat may exist.

In addition, the MH-53E is the only heavy lift helicopter in the U.S. Navy's inventory. It has been called upon to perform humanitarian assistance / disaster relief (HADR) missions in Southeast Asia, AMCM missions in the Caribbean and Pacific, presidential support in South America, and logistical support both home and abroad.

## Resolving Issues through Current Readiness

HM has seen several critical improvements in the last

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remove barriers.

In December 2007, the Strike Fighter (VFA) community briefed the NAE Air Board on their NEC Fit Gap at Naval Air Station Lemoore and reported their intent to launch a continuous process improvement event to determine the root cause of this gap, identify the barriers contributing to the gap, and then remove those barriers. (See accompanying article on Page 1) The community's transition from the C/D series to the E/F airframe compounded their challenge.

Despite these difficulties, Cmdr. Lem Massey, Commander, Strike Fighter Wing Pacific (CSFWP) maintenance officer, and Lt. Cmdr. Ken Lookabough, CSFWP assistant maintenance officer, formed a barrier removal team (BRT) and quickly got to work.

In July of 2008, they briefed the results of their efforts and provided recommendations--many of which have been implemented by NAE. They include:

- A Total Force triad comprised of the wing AMO, the CNATT unit commanding officer and PERS 404 representatives. Today, this team works to identify priority training needs and optimize/improve current student through-

put.

- An NEC alternate path generation process to allow Sailors who have obtained the requisite training and skills via on-the-job training, to challenge the course using a CNATT-approved process which protects the quality of the NEC.
- A BRT to examine the NEC award process to reduce errors and determine root cause of the excessive cycle time from award recommendation to actual award.

All of these efforts are paying dividends and contributing to NEC Fit gap closure. However, more work needs to be done to address some of the systemic issues that contribute to the gaps for many of our units.

The Distribution Challenges BRT, led by Rear Adm. Pat McGrath, Commander, Naval Air Forces Reserve and Vice Commander, Naval Air Forces, is one initiative chartered to look at the gaps at Naval Air Station Lemoore, and other "hard fill" locations. This team identified barriers that have resulted in an inventory imbalance and created personnel readiness degradation. This team provided me with recommendations to mitigate many of the barriers

causing this imbalance and I plan to take them to Chief of Naval Operations (Navy Total Force) (OPNAV N1) flag leadership for action.

In this challenging fiscal environment, we understand that all of our people readiness issues will not be addressed quickly. I am proud of the teamwork displayed between our TF team and the fleet customers that resulted in repeatable processes that will close our NEC Fit gaps. Those lessons learned are being passed throughout the NAE. Coupled with enterprise behavior, those processes will be useful to Naval Aviation leadership who endeavor to do everything within their power to improve personnel readiness.

In the future, we plan to show the link between the individual Sailor or Marine and readiness through a combination of NEC Fit and the Qualified Proficient Technician (QPT) Fit, including Rating and Payband FIT. The metrics will not only measure formal training, but experience as well.

We are committed to an NAE workforce that is exceptionally skilled and high-performing. Sailors and Marines will have the opportunity to achieve the qualifications required to FLY, FIGHT, AND WIN! ■

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opportunities.

The solution was the Training Triad – an idea generated in August 2008 by the Navy Enlisted Classification Barrier Removal Team headed by Cmdr. Lance Massey, Strike Fighter Wing Pacific maintenance officer. The partnership was created to develop long-range turnaround training plans with more fidelity and to promote better communication among the wing, local Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Units (CNATTU), and Navy Personnel Command (NPC).

The impetus for the Training Triad may seem simple, but just saying the community has a good working relationship with the local CNATTU is not enough; formalization is the key to all parties buying into it. By having NPC as a stakeholder, all are now equally responsible and more responsive to the needs of the community. This is a must in a community that faces numerous manning challenges.

It took buy-in from all stakeholders to implement the long-range training plans for the squadrons. For example, giving squadron aviation maintenance officers (AMO) the ability to send quotas to the local CNATTU up to a year in advance was a major change in the way business was conducted among the commands. From the start, all recognized and accepted the probability that the requests could require additional classes to be scheduled or cause changes to start dates in order to accommodate schedules.

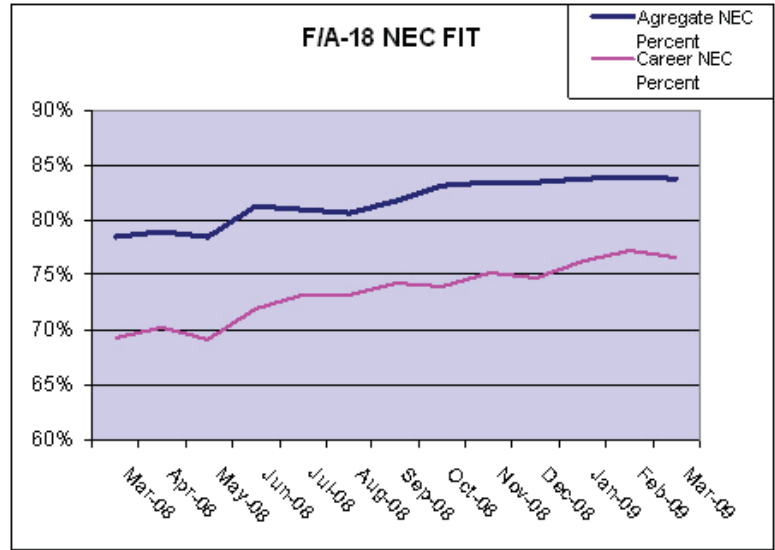
It has been a little over a year since the change. The results for the F/A-18 community have been numerous:

- As Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 115 began preparing for a homeport change (HPC) to Japan, it identified training gaps. Working together, the AMO of the squadron and Commander, Strike Fighter Wing Pacific (CSFWP) prioritized the requirements and then presented a request to CNATTU Lemoore and NPC for the required seats. That request was filled. All Sailors completed their training and VFA-115 arrived in Japan at 85 percent NEC Fit. This is an extraordinary feat, considering it was accomplished as they came off cruise, upgraded aircraft, surged, and then left for Japan within a month's time.

- NPC had a need for additional aviation ordnance initial courses to prevent a backlog of students who required training and were waiting in Pensacola. CNATTU Lemoore stood up two additional courses to accommodate them.

The Training Triad has been time well spent. It opened doors that previously were closed, highlighted issues to stakeholders who were unaware of problems and provided a way to quickly fix them. As an aggregate, our NEC Fit has increased by over 280 Sailors and counting. These results do not solely stem from a squadron AMO, in conjunction with the CSFWP AMO, identifying, requesting and filling seats, but because of the collaboration and partnership with NPC and CNATTU.

The issue of NECs cannot be fixed overnight, but will



Thanks to the work of the Training Triad, the NEC Fit rate in the F/A-18 community has steadily improved in the last year.

take continued involvement from the Triad. Since its inception, the Triad has expanded to cover future issues on what will get the community the most out of its resources.

Success is not always easily measured, but comments from AMOs tell the story. "My Sailors are happy," one said, "because they know getting the school they require and deserve is attainable." "This process has been great and the improvements in qualifications at my squadron bear out the success," said another.

You can make a difference, even at the local level. ■

## Navy records to reflect Sailors' CPI expertise

As of April, Navy Green Belts are now able to have their continuous process improvement (CPI) skill sets formally recognized on their official records.

That's when Navy Manpower Analysis Center included Navy enlisted classification (NEC) 9564 – a CPI Core Green Belt – in the Manual of Navy Enlisted Manpower and Personnel Classifications and Occupational Standards (NAVPERS) 18068F which is scheduled to be released in July.

(Currently, the secondary NEC is only being assigned to individuals; the next NAMP release, slated for October, will establish CPI Core Green Belt billets. While Sailors will not be required to have the NEC before filling a Green Belt billet, they will be required to

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fiscal year. One of the most significant was the reduction of its aircraft and mission systems ready for tasking (RFT) gap by over 55 percent, greatly exceeding the Commander, Naval Air Forces Atlantic (CNAL) mandated goal of 15 percent. All of these improvements can be attributed to processes initiated in response to gaps that were identified through Current Readiness.

The increase in qualified maintenance manpower has been realized thanks to the initiatives instituted by the wing over the past year. All non-aircrew maintenance rates have a Navy Enlisted Classification Fit of 80 percent, two percent above the NAE average; since January 2007, it has increased by 28 percent. The Fleet Replacement Detachment (FRD) has an NEC Fit of 71 percent – a dramatic improvement compared to its rate of 48 percent a year ago.

However, the biggest challenge continues to be the qualified proficient technician (QPT) Fit of personnel found in the FRD. With a QPT Fit of 42 percent (29 percent below the fleet average), the FRD authorized billets are funded at only 63 percent of the command's requirement. Unless more platform-experienced personnel are assigned, QPT levels will not increase in the next few months.

When CHSCWL, along with Fleet Readiness Center (FRC) Mid-Atlantic and Program Manager (PMA) 261 presented their Current Readiness brief to the Naval Aviation Enterprise Air Board in February, they not only covered the outstanding progress made in improving the basic qualifications of its personnel, but the multiple challenges that faced the MH-53E TMS during the last reporting period, including the QPT shortfalls that have created challenges down to the deckplate level.

In the short time since these issues were presented, barrier removal teams have been formed to assist the community in resolving these discrepancies.

An NAE team consisting of representatives from the squadron, CHSCWL, CNAL, Commander, Naval Air Forces, the Bureau of Navy Personnel, and the Total Force Cross-functional Team has been identified to mitigate the QPT readiness degrader and to recommend an appropriate course of action. These steps would not have been possible without the



A member of Helicopter Mine Countermeasure Squadron (HM) 15 signals to U.S. Army and Coast Guard personnel to get down to avoid the rotor wash from an MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopter during sling drills. Army, Coast Guard and Navy personnel moved a replacement generator to Warba Island off the coast of Kuwait in April. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jorge Saucedo/Navy.mil)

guidance and leadership of the NAE Air Boss [Vice Adm. Tom Kilcline, Jr.] and his staff.

Also, the recent approval of the Aircrewman Selective Re-Enlistment Bonus (SRB) levels and the Sea Duty Incentive Pay (SDIP), as per Navy Administrative Message 240/80 and Navy Bureau of Personnel PERS-40DD, respectively, were significant steps to mitigating the community's aircrew shortages.

### **The Way Ahead**

Current Readiness and its tools have not only helped to bring needed attention to community challenges, it has also created and improved upon lines of communication. Partnering with other NAE activities has resulted in several new ideas being developed, briefed, and ultimately, implemented.

During the February Air Board, CHSCWL presented the Air Boss with

a tool that was created to identify and assess risk within the wing.

Safety studies showed that the probability of mishaps among pilots who fly less than 15 hours in a 30-day period (identified as "yellow pilots") is higher than those who log more flight hours; that probability significantly increases among pilots who log less than 10 hours in the same 30 days (identified as "red pilots"). To mitigate the risk of having two, low-flight hour pilots fly together, a model was created and implemented to help squadron commanding officers track the flight hours of pilots. The model ensures resources (flight hours and aircraft) are being optimized by tracking different elements (for example, the mission being executed, time of day of the mission, and a pilot's time in the cockpit) of each flying hour.

In addition, the HM MH-53E community is the last rotary wing aircraft in the DoD to integrate Night Vision Devices (NVDs) into all phases of night operations. The Air Boss's approval of NVD use for the community is an essential risk mitigation tool for

nighttime flying. The HM community has begun the "crawl" phase of NVD operations, identifying crews, syllabus events, and commencing NVD instructor training. Within one year of implementation and with no additional program or flight hour funding required, all HM flight crews will enjoy the benefits that NVDs bring, enhancing all aspects of mission effectiveness and safety.

The NAE has provided a framework for the HM community to assess its current readiness, identify and mitigate gaps, enabling it to operate at a high training and operational tempo. It also has provided a mechanism to share successful and replicable processes that can increase readiness in all communities. Without the use of enterprise behaviors, the interchange of information and the resolution of issues would be impossible to accomplish. ■

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have a minimum of 12 months left on-station after earning their Green Belt qualification.)

The NEC can be awarded through a combination of formal training at Sailors' commands and on-the-job training. Sailors must have completed two Define, Measure, Activate, Improve, Control (DMAIC) projects, two rapid improvement events or one DMAIC project and one rapid improvement event. Although only first class petty officers and above are eligible for the NEC, second and third class petty officers can earn the NEC with their commanding officer's endorse-

ment.

The Maintenance and Supply Integration Performance Improvement Branch (MSIPIB) and local commands have trained and certified more than 730 Sailors and Marines as Green Belts in the last five years, said Brenda Sanders, acting MSIPIB deputy project lead.

"Until now, however, there hasn't been a mechanism to formally certify Navy Green Belts and track them from unit to unit. Not only will commanders have better visibility into the skill sets of their workforce and be able to strategically place them, but it will help Naval Aviation more accurately gage if

it is meeting the Department of the Navy's guidance that calls for four percent of its workforce to be Green Belt trained," she said.

The Marine Corps established a military occupation specialty for both enlisted (6618) and officer (6608) a few year ago to maximize return on training investment and ensure that Marines are officially recognized for their performance.

For more information on how to apply for the NEC, go to: [https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/current\\_readiness/MSCM/AirSpeed/Training/GB%20NEC.doc](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/current_readiness/MSCM/AirSpeed/Training/GB%20NEC.doc). ■

## AIRSpeed Excellence in CPI Awards submission deadline: June 30

The Maintenance & Supply Integration Performance Improvement Branch (MSIPIB) is currently accepting nominations for the Enterprise AIRSpeed Site of the Year "Battle A" Award and the Master Gunnery Sergeant John S. Evancho Innovator of the Year Award. Criteria are posted on the Enterprise AIRSpeed SharePoint site.

Nominations are also being solicited for a new category, the Enterprise AIRSpeed Leadership Award, which recognizes excellence in continuous process improvement by E-7s and above.

"Junior Sailor and Marines' successes

start with supervisors who empower and support them," said Brenda Sanders, acting MSIPIB deputy project lead. "NAE leadership wants to recognize that level of leadership and encourage others to follow their example."

Sites (including aircraft carriers) can submit applications for one, two or all three categories.

For more information and nomination criteria, go to [https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/current\\_readiness/MSCM/AirSpeed/default.aspx](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/current_readiness/MSCM/AirSpeed/default.aspx). ■

### Links of interest

1. FRC Southeast petty officer selected as U.S. Fleet Forces Sea Sailor of the Year  
Aviation Electronics Technician First Class (AW/SW) Robert L. Barber will be meritoriously advanced to Chief Petty Officer in July by the Chief of Naval Operations and the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy.  
<http://www.cnaf.navy.mil/airspeed/default.asp?PressReleaseID=53878>
2. CNP: 'We are Striving to Become a Top 50 Employer'  
Click here to listen to a podcast of Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. Mark Ferguson speak on the Navy's programs and policies that are designed to attract, recruit, develop and retain a high quality workforce.  
[http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story\\_id=45207](http://www.navy.mil/search/display.asp?story_id=45207)
3. Fleet Readiness Center Southwest Almanac May-June 2009  
This issue features the FRCSW foundry shop and a report on the command's performance at the aviation maintenance competition held during this year's Aviation Expo in Las Vegas.  
[https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/FRCSW%20Almanac/FRCSW%20Almanac%20May-June%202009.pdf](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/FRCSW%20Almanac/FRCSW%20Almanac%20May-June%202009.pdf)

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4. NAVSEA's *Who's on Watch* – May 2009  
Featured in this issue:
  - First "Virtual" Lean Event Hosted by Naval Undersea Warfare Center Newport
  - From Refueling to RefueLean: The Transition
  - Naval Surface Warfare Center Dahlgren Lab's New Telephone Audit Process To Improve Service And Save Money

[https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/WOW%20Newsletter%20\(NAVSEA\)/MAY09WOW.pdf](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/WOW%20Newsletter%20(NAVSEA)/MAY09WOW.pdf)

Earlier editions can be found at:  
[https://inside.navsea.navy.mil/Navseacity/LISTING\\_TMP.ASPX?iWebContentID=2975&iObjectID=1](https://inside.navsea.navy.mil/Navseacity/LISTING_TMP.ASPX?iWebContentID=2975&iObjectID=1)
5. CNO's Monthly Update – May 2009  
This issue outlines Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead talking points on the workforce, current readiness and future readiness.  
[https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/CNO%20Monthly%20Update%2004%20May%2009.pdf](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/CNO%20Monthly%20Update%2004%20May%2009.pdf)
6. Rhumb Lines
  - Recruiting in Today's Environment  
Facts and figures on the recruitment challenges facing the Navy.  
[https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/Navy%20Recruiting%2027%20APR%2009.pdf](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/Navy%20Recruiting%2027%20APR%2009.pdf)
  - Building a Top 50 Organization  
Read how the Navy is attracting and retaining the best and brightest America has to offer.  
[https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/Rhumb%20Lines%20-%20Top%2050%2019%20May%2009.pdf](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/Rhumb%20Lines%20-%20Top%2050%2019%20May%2009.pdf)
  - Total Force in Action  
A listing of the contributions of the Navy's active, reserve and civilian components.  
[https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/Total%20Force%20in%20Action%206%20May%2009.pdf](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/Total%20Force%20in%20Action%206%20May%2009.pdf)
  - Force Stabilization  
Read about the initiatives in place to encourage Sailors to "Stay Navy."  
[https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/Force%20Stabilization%2026%20JAN%2009.pdf](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/Force%20Stabilization%2026%20JAN%2009.pdf)
  - Joint Programs for Future Readiness  
The Navy is joining forces with other services to execute acquisition programs.  
[https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/Joint%20Warfighter%20Programs%2025%20FEB%2009.pdf](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/AirSpeed%20Newsletters/Newsletter%20repository/Rhumb%20Lines/Joint%20Warfighter%20Programs%2025%20FEB%2009.pdf)
7. DoN CPI SECNAVINST 5220.14  
This instruction establishes policy to institutionalize continuous process improvement (CPI) as one of the primary enablers to manage the effectiveness and efficiency of Department of the Navy (DON) processes in support of the Department's national defense mission.  
[https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/current\\_readiness/MSCM/AirSpeed/Policy/SECNAVINST%205220%20on%20CPI%20distributed%2014%20May%202009.pdf](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/current_readiness/MSCM/AirSpeed/Policy/SECNAVINST%205220%20on%20CPI%20distributed%2014%20May%202009.pdf)
8. NAE Air Plan  
Learn about the purpose, the activities and successes of "Boots-on-the Ground/Deck" in this edition.  
[https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval\\_Aviation\\_Enterprise/Air%20Plans/Air%20Plan%204%20May09.pdf](https://www.fleetforces.navy.mil/comnavairfor/Naval_Aviation_Enterprise/Air%20Plans/Air%20Plan%204%20May09.pdf)
9. NAVAIR *AIRSpeed* May 2009 Snapshots  
A synopsis of their CPI success stories.  
<http://www.cnaf.navy.mil/airspeed/content.asp?ItemID=1408>